



Calming Stress

Stress and anxiety are part of daily life. Stress may often be seen in a negative light, yet we may fail to understand the positive aspects of distress and anxiety. Stress and anxiety may actually help us in several ways! It may increase our awareness to potential threats, and prepare us for a crisis and for action. Even worrying may help prepare us by looking for possible options, and by practicing for potential outcomes...

What can we do? There are some proven strategies that you may use to cope with your anxiety, distress and worry! With practice and regular use, these techniques may help you reduce your stress...

Reduce The Uncertainty

Not knowing about something often makes the stress rise and you may actually end up feeling worse! The uncertainty and the unpredictability may make you feel on the edge...

What to do? Obtain more facts and information about the specific stressor and situation. This information may help with understanding the uncertainty...

Also consider making a decision. This action may provide some relief and direction on what you can do.

Worry

Schedule some worry time into your daily schedule. Although at first glance this may seem funny, it may actually help you! Consider collecting all your worries- for instance write them down, and then addressing them- by thinking of possible solutions, at one sitting. It helps to set a time period for the worry time- perhaps 15 minutes, but no more than 30 minutes. When worries arise during the night or day, write them down and save them for the worry time.

There is another strategy for dealing with your worries! Rather than dwelling on and focusing on your own troubles, which can lead to more worrying, consider doing some other activity. Often what helps is to assist someone with their tasks, chores... How about spending some of your time with a particular cause, or volunteering for something... Time spent in another pursuit may help you regain your perspective, and may lessen your troubles...

Worrying may appear to be a better alternative than doing something to the worrier. Yet taking some type of action may help! Spending lots of hours worrying may only lead to more worries and distress... So consider the option of doing something- however small to tackle the trouble. Action often reduces some of the worry! And it may break or at least stop the worry cycle...

Combat Negative Talk

Stress and anxiety often goes hand in hand with negative self-talk. We frequently say negative things to ourselves that may evoke and increase our fears, worries and anxieties. Our self-talk may be much more catastrophic than we realize! Also our negative talk may lead us to actually believe our fears and put downs...

So what to do? How about checking out and recording some of your self-talk for a few days. After you have actually heard and seen some of these negatives, you have an opportunity to be objective with them. You may alter the self-statements, challenge their accuracy and validity, and even change them to be more realistic! You may ask yourself the question- What is the proof for this statement? It often helps to keep your own thoughts focused on what you can do now; and to be in the present moment- and not in the future. And do not forget to compliment yourself when you have modified and challenged your negative talk to positive self-talk! Remember to speak nicely to yourself!

**"It is actually possible to experience joy in stress."
--Dr. Kenneth Cooper**